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REMARKS

I. INTRODUCTION

Claims 1-18 are pending in this application. The Office Action rejected Claims 1-9 and 17 and allowed Claims 10-16 (Claim 18 was not addressed). The forgoing amendment amends Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12-14, 16 and 17 to clarify certain aspects of the invention.

II. Oudet Does Not Describe, Teach or Suggest the Invention of Claims 1-9, 17 and 18

The Office Action rejected Claims 1-9 and 17 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 5,532,585 to Oudet et al. ("Oudet"). In rejecting Claim 1, the Office Action equated the coupling member (12) shown in Fig. 1 of Oudet to the claimed slider and the upper ferromagnetic component (4) to the claimed stator. As described in Oudet, the upper ferromagnetic component is connected to a lower ferromagnetic component (5) by two lateral brass flanges 10, 11. Column 2, lines 59-60. A fluid-tight tube (13) is placed in the air gap between the upper ferromagnetic component and the lower ferromagnetic component and the magnet (3) travels in the tube. Column 3, lines 19-20.

The foregoing amendment to Claim 1 clarifies that the slider enters an area of the stator. Since the coupling member (12) of Oudet does not enter an area of the upper ferromagnetic component (4), Oudet does not describe the claimed stator.

Independent Claims 2, 4, and 7 have been amended in a manner similar to Claim 1 and are patentable over Oudet for at least the same reasons as Claim 1. Claim 3 depends from Claim 1 or 2, Claims 5 and 6 depend from Claim 4, and Claims 8 and 9 depend from Claim 7. The dependent claims are distinguishable from Oudet for at least the same reasons as the independent claims.

Claim 17 has been amended to clarify that the main stator and the assist stator are on the same side of the slider. As shown in Fig. 1 of Oudet, the upper ferromagnetic component (4) and the lower ferromagnetic component (5) are on opposite sides of the coupling member

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(12). Thus, Claim 17 is distinguishable from Oudet. Claim 18 depends from claim 17 and is patentable over Oudet for at least the same reasons as Claim 17.

CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the pending claims are allowable and a notice of allowance is respectfully requested. If there are any issues that can be resolved via a telephone conference, the Examiner is invited to contact Brenda Holmes at 404.685.6799.

Respectfully submitted,



Brenda O. Holmes
Reg. No. 40,339

Kilpatrick Stockton LLP
1100 Peachtree Street
Suite 2800
Atlanta, Georgia 30309
(404) 815-6500
KS File: 44471/324299